



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

THE RAILWAY ISSUE,

39769

LABOR, MONEY, ETC.

BY

CASSIUS MARCELLUS CLAY,
WHITE HALL, KENTUCKY.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY,
1891.



THE RAILWAY ISSUE, LABOR, MONEY, ETC.

FROM THE ADDRESS OF CASSIUS MARCEL-
LUS CLAY,

FOR THE CLASS 1832, BEFORE THE ALUMNI OF YALE
UNIVERSITY, JUNE 28, 1887.

[*New York Times*, June 29, 1887.]

Cassius M. Clay made an eloquent address, in which he discussed the Prohibition, Labor, and Woman Suffrage questions. He said: * * * *
The Labor party is more securely based upon the right to be. Radical socialism and anarchy are justly outside of the pale of toleration and must stand forever as crimes. Labor and capital are one in most respects. The healthy, well-developed man is capital; he stands at times worth in person a thousand dollars, and with a thousand dollars more invested in education he has a capital of more than two thousand dollars. So labor is capital in possibility, and gold, silver, etc., capital in fact. Labor must then be allowed a fair hearing,—must be represented by a separate party if it thinks best. It must be protected in its rights. In legislation, being the weaker party, it must be placed upon an open and fair field in the race of life, and then government aid ceases,—and the devil take the hindmost.

Yes, Labor has its grievances. The public lands should not be allowed to foreigners; nor to railroad corporations; nor to the churches; nor to any other combinations of Capital, save for the plant necessary to combined industries and moral and intellectual culture. Laborers are entitled to equal taxation, to one ballot and a fair count, to an honest currency of gold, silver, and paper dollars of equal value. It is not to be plundered by discrimination and unequal freight. *The railroads must be owned by the government, valued and paid for at a fair price; it will be a great sum, but it will be the price of liberty.* They are entitled to the common school for the safety of the State. But the rights of property in lands and severalty in other things is the base of all civilization, and must be held forever inviolable.

[*Kentucky Leader*, Lexington, Ky., March 12, 1891.]

HON. CASSIUS M. CLAY

SENDS THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF LETTERS TO THE "LEADER."—THE VETERAN STATESMAN TRACES THE GROWTH OF AMERICAN RAILWAYS IN AMERICA AND SHOWS THE DANGEROUS POWER THEY WIELD.

No. I.

The first railroad, I believe, ever built in America was the Baltimore road, from that city to Riddles's Mills, on the Western stage-route. This was about 1832. There were short railways used by miners

before this, pulled by men or horses, called tramways, but they were not used in England or America till about the years 1830 or 1832 for long distances.

The next railroad was from Lexington to Frankfort to get water communication. The stringers were of hewn limestone, the cross-ties of wood, and the rails of common bar-iron. All the cars were pulled by horses. After a while the T rail took the place of the simple bar, and wood was put in place of the stone, and steam substituted for the horse-power.

Our family took \$20,000 of stock in that road and lost every dollar.

About 1858, I loaned ten thousand (\$10,000) dollars, and took Mad River (O.) railway stock for security. That road was wrecked, and I lost every dollar!

In 1870 the railroad builders, who had in those years, from 1832 to 1870, grown into a class (who form now the great mass of railroad owners and managers whom I call robbers), concluded to make a railroad from New York to Newark, N. J. This was the principal city in that State, and regarded as the most progressive one in the east. It was a manufacturing city. There was a railroad running from Philadelphia, touching Newark on the outskirts and ending in New York, making a long detour around the deep salt marshes which are overflowed from the Atlantic Ocean.

Newark was too tempting a plum for the wreckers to leave to honest industry and thrift. So they got up a boom and projected an air-line road from Jersey City to Newark,—first to “create competition,” and next to make Newark a shipping port with a fine

harbor and open seas (Hell Gate was not blown up in New York harbor then), to draw off trade from New York and make the thrifty city the centre of American export. All this was done, not for the benefit of the robbers, but for the dear people! I, who had not been in America for eight years, did not know that there was a large class of the finest minds in America engaged in combined robbery as a profession; so I was persuaded to invest six thousand five hundred (\$6500) dollars in a lot and cottage at Newark. Now, when the direct line was made from Main Street in Newark by the robbers and the city crossing the immense salt marshes (for the cities are always for railroads, or any other expenditure which comes out of other people's pockets), the wealthy citizens went in one hour to New York, made all their purchases, and returned home the same day. The upshot was that Newark was wrecked, and all the railroad stock lost.

I, too, lost every cent of my \$6500, and told my lawyers to deed the city my lot and take a receipt against further robbery.

Lands at this time are sold out to close mortgages in New Jersey, or abandoned, which, before the railroad system, were worth from one hundred to five hundred dollars. The people were sent to the poor-house, but the robbers were wealthier than the greatest monarchs of the world.

Did they get transportation any cheaper by competition? Not a cent.

Let us see how this philanthropic move affected Newark and the "hayseeds" of the vicinage.

1. The wealthy buying in New York, the tradespeople had to go there too. The "hayseeds," find-

ing no buyers in Newark, were compelled to sell at reduced prices their lands and "go West."

2. The mechanics and laborers of the country followed the mechanics and laborers of the city, and went to New York also.

3. So that the few farmers left could get no laborers or mechanics. They could no longer make or use manure by purchase; the lands and their products went down, whilst the freight to the cities and all that they purchased went up by the combination of the road with adulterators, trusts, and other smaller thieves!

4. The upshot is that the railroad robbers own the public highways, have unlimited power of taxation, and keep a standing army under the name of "detectives," who kill our people at will!

5. They are smart fellows; they make great speeches in Congress and at royal banquets, aspire to the Presidency; bulldoze the Senate, the House, and the President of the United States, and purchase outright the State Legislatures; they give tickets of free passage to editors, clergymen, and all other men who influence public opinion; unite with them leading men of all professions and occupations by a common interest of plunder. The lawyers are their especial defenders and receive the largest pay. Their business is generally to make the "worse appear the better cause." So that there is one vast framework which, like the spider's web, envelopes all industry and honest labor.

CASSIUS M. CLAY.

WHITE HALL, KY., Feb. 1891.

THE RAILROAD POWER.

SECOND OF CASSIUS M. CLAY'S SERIES OF ARTICLES
ON THE GROWTH OF RAILWAY CORPORATIONS AND
THE NECESSITY OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF INTER-
STATE LINES.

The series of articles now running in *The Leader* from the pen of Hon. Cassius M. Clay, Sr., is attracting much attention, and, while many persons do not entirely agree with the veteran Kentuckian in his radical views, all agree that in the existing condition of things there is room for reform.

COURIER-JOURNAL COMMENT.

The *Courier-Journal* of the 13th inst. says :

Hon. Cassius M. Clay, Sr., is writing a series of letters to the *Lexington Leader* directed against what he denominates "the railroad robbers." He writes with all his old vigor and is sweeping in his denunciations.

General Clay contributed a special article on trusts and combines last week, which brought forth the following letter from an Ohio reader of *The Leader* :

AN OHIO VIEW.

Editor of *The Leader*.

The article contributed by Hon. Cassius M. Clay to the last issue of *The Leader* on "trusts and combines" doubtless voices the sentiments and principles of a large proportion of the farmers of Kentucky, and especially the tobacco growers. The time is ripe in this country for the people, which in a large sense means those who till the soil and those who otherwise labor for honorable subsistence, to rise in their might and strike down heartless trusts and combinations.

The tobacco interest of Kentucky is large, and affects a very considerable proportion of your population; hence the

effort on the part of the growers to remove that interest from the power and clutch of a heartless combine to their own control is just and commendable. It is now in the power of Lexington to achieve for herself and the farmers of the Commonwealth a magnificent commercial position by securing the location of the growers' warehouses. That Lexington is *par excellence* the place for them, every intelligent man will admit, and not only is it in point of location and railway facilities the best place in the State for the location of warehouses, but the same argument will, with equal force, apply to it as the future selection for the State capital.

SILAS A. WOODMANSEE.

NEW VIENNA, OHIO, Feb. 14, 1891.

No. 2.

THE RAILROAD POWER.

My next experience with the wreckers was that by which we were taxed in Madison County five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000)—every fourteenth dollar of all the real estate and personal property in this wealthy county of \$7,000,000. I took the stump against the first tax for the Central railroad and denounced them as wreckers, but the lawyers rallied to the rescue, I contending that the stock would be worth nothing, they claiming that it would be at par. But so soon as the stock was paid for; \$250,000, the stipendiaries of the company sold our county stock for 33½c. on the dollar! This was a grand coup on the part of Madison, for the stock of those holding on, by the bunco tactics of making loans and mortgages, and then closing them out for the benefit of the robbers, was wrecked.

The Louisville operators, not content with their

other levies upon industry, who are clothed like the lilies, but never toil, and who can denounce the "hayseeds" and pour upon them unceasing words of contempt, were not satisfied without joining the Central in its easy spoliation. They projected a road from that city to Beattyville, at the forks of the Kentucky river, in the coal, lumber and iron regions. They came upon us for another quarter of a million dollars. My failure to save the other quarter made me feel that my opposition would be useless, and, as the road was on the way to our nearest Eastern seaport, I, with my friends, supported it. But what did the wreckers? They formed a "credit mobilier" robbery (after George Francis Train's model, which ruined Colfax and caused Brooks to commit suicide, and damned hundreds of other farmers), under the name of the "Construction Company." In this, not content to carry the lawyers and editors of the newspapers, they moved on the ranks of the farmers themselves, and seduced many of the most wealthy to the criminal scheme of enriching themselves at the expense of honest industry. When I saw my scheme of a road to the nearest sea-shore wrecked and my money in taxes lost, I began a vigorous war upon the whole system at once through the press and on the stump.

The upshot of the matter is, that we pay on

Railways 14 cents per hundred dollars, principal due.

Turnpikes 14 " " " "

28 cents.

6½ " county levy, mostly for road-making.

84½ cents.

42½ cents, State tax.

8 cents.

This, including county tithe, \$2.00, would make more money paid for roads than all other taxes put together.

In the mean time the half-million dollars goes to New York or London, and we go on down the descending grade to poverty and ultimate slavery. Lands of mine worth one hundred dollars an acre, the best lands in the world, have gone down to fifty dollars in value. I have lost once more, besides the tax, one hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) by the robbers, on my tract of two thousand two hundred and fifty acres, and the end is not yet.

Under the present system it were better that every foot of railroad in the world was sunk into the sea than that we should submit longer to the banditti.

In addition to these losses by railroad made for the people, I pay a county tax for road-making, mend the roads for the public, and, after all, have to work the roads myself; and yet from three to five months in the year I can't get over a mile of road to the turn-pike with a wheel carriage.

C. M. CLAY.

A WARNING TO RAILWAYS.

GOVERNOR J. M. THAYER, OF NEBRASKA, WRITES A LETTER IN BEHALF OF THE FARMERS.

LINCOLN, NEB., March 17.—Governor Thayer has addressed a second letter to the railway managers on the corn rate question. He reviewed the history of the agitation, and declared that the gamblers, speculators, and dealers in futures have absorbed the ten per cent. reduction granted and the farmers have had no benefit therefrom. He makes another demand for a ten per cent. rate per one hundred from Nebraska

points to Chicago, and, after contrasting the prosperous condition of the railway with that of the poverty-stricken farmers, he declares that the people of Nebraska don't want to fight the railways.

They desire that they shall prosper, but they demand that the railway shall no longer oppress them as they have done. They demand that the roads shall give them fair and reasonable rates, so that they may obtain a just return for their labors and investments. The people, and the farming classes especially, are aroused now as they never have been before, and will not cease their demands until justice has been granted. He says: "I again warn you of the disastrous consequences to the roads if their just demands are refused, and I say this not by way of a threat, but as a friendly warning." — *Washington Post*, 1890.

Another of them, Prof. Richard T. Ely, argues against the private management of railways from the swindling, watering, wrecking rascality, which has to some extent characterized the history of American railway management. He thinks that under a system of public ownership the people would get an honest service, and that, because the roads touch the life and pockets of all citizens directly and constantly, no political trickery in their management would be tolerated for a moment.

EXTRACTS FROM THE BIENNIAL MESSAGE OF GOV. BUCKNER TO THE KENTUCKY LEGISLATURE.

RAILROAD AND OTHER CORPORATIONS.

While the report of a committee of the last General Assembly reveals some of the improper and illegal methods employed by corporations in attempting to influence legislation, it is believed that an impartial investigation, under your authority, will show that many of these corporations resort to the most corrupt means of influencing local elections. Your attention is especially invited to a consideration of this subject. If such methods be acquiesced in, the result will be that the vast sums amassed by these monopolies, in many cases by ex-

torting it from the people, will be employed in corrupting the very sources of free government, and in practically diverting legislation into the hands of corporate power.

A corporation thus abusing its privileges, and corrupting the public morals, should be punished by forfeiting its charter, and the offending officials punished by fine, imprisonment, and deprivation of the rights of citizenship.

It will be the pleasing duty of the Executive to unite with the General Assembly, in their patriotic purpose to repress the extravagant demands of individual greed to grow fat at the expense of the public; to keep within bounds the constant encroachment of corporate power; and to enact legislation, which, granting exclusive privileges to none, will be just alike to every element of society. By such just measures alone can public welfare be promoted, and the liberties of a free public be maintained.

Respectfully,

S. B. BUCKNER.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE, FRANKFORT, December 30, 1889.

ONLY ONE FARMER IN THE U. S. SENATE.

We have made a partial analysis of the composition of the 51st Congress. This analysis shows that this so-called representative body falls far short of representing the entire people. We only have 82 United States Senators recorded in the Congressional directory. Sixty-nine of them are lawyers, two are merchants, and the rest are railroad men, bankers, speculators, with only farmer, Senator L. R. Casey, of North Dakota. Mr. Casey is the only Alliance man in the Senate. In the Lower House we have 335 representatives, of whom 281 are lawyers, 28 are merchants and manufacturers, 18 farmers, one surveyor, three preachers and newspaper men; the remaining 52 are connected with banks and railroads. Of the 417 members in both houses, 300 belong to the legal profession; thus, there being 64,137 lawyers in this country, we have in our National Congress one lawyer for every 218 in the country. The same census gives us 7,670,493 engaged in agriculture. So we have in Congress one farmer for every 590,000 farmers. Where is the representation?—*Progressive Farmer*, May, 1890.

The *Winchester Sun*, March, 1891, says: "It is reported here that the people along the line of the Kentucky Union railway, above Clay City, are almost in a destitute condition. Last summer these people were working on the railroad and failed to cultivate the usual crops, consequently they have no provender to feed their stock. The railroad has run short of funds and their wages have not been paid, consequently they have no money. A gentleman who has recently been in the mountains, along the line of the Kentucky Union, told us a few days ago that he saw ten yokes of oxen sold under an execution for \$106, the oxen bringing only \$5.25 per head. He says that the stock all through the country is actually starving."

RECEIVER ASKED FOR THE MONON.

NEW YORK STOCKHOLDER ACCUSES PRESIDENT BREYFOGLE OF TRYING TO WRECK THE ROAD.

CHICAGO, Feb. 17.—William S. Alley, of New York, has asked Judge Tuley, of the Circuit Court, to appoint a receiver for the Louisville, New Albany & Chicago railway. This request is based upon a lengthy bill filed to-day, in which President William L. Breyfogle and the present officers are accused of being almost everything that they ought not to be. Mr. Alley is a New York stock-broker, and was on intimate and confidential terms with the J. B. Carson management of the Monon, and at different times has handled much of the stock. He alleges that President Breyfogle has doctored up the records of the directory and packed the board with his personal friends, who were not stockholders and had no knowledge of the railroad business. He is charged with having wrecked the road and rendered it bankrupt. The court is asked to restrain further disposition of the stock and to prevent an election of officers. A conspiracy is alleged between Mr. Breyfogle and Henry S. Ives, of New York, to wreck the company and buy it in for confederates. It is said that Mr. Breyfogle is scheming to increase the capital stock to \$7,500,000. Judge Tuley referred the matter to Master-in-Chancery Boysen to take evidence. Director John B. Hughes,

speaking for President Breyfogle, pronounced the proceedings simply a malicious attack on the credit of the company.—*Indianapolis Journal*, February 25, 1891.

HON. CASSIUS M. CLAY

CONTRIBUTES THE THIRD OF HIS SERIES OF ARTICLES
ON THE RAILWAY PROBLEM AS IT PRESENTS ITSELF
IN KENTUCKY AND THE COUNTRY AT LARGE.

No. 3.

THE RAILROAD ROBBERS.

Let us take a few more cases of their criminal acts. They charged me \$26 to carry a crib and sheep, 300 pounds, to Louisiana. The sheep cost the buyers \$20. Here they charged the farmer \$6 more than the sheep was worth! I got a barrel of sugar from the same section, weight, say the same; it cost me by water \$1, for the one thousand miles to Louisville, and from Louisville to Richmond, one hundred miles, it cost me \$1. Thus the railroads charged me more than ten times as much as water-carriage. In the sheep case they charged me twenty-six times as much as the water-ways!

From Abilene, in Texas, to carry wheat 150 miles to a non-competing point they charged ten cents per bushel; and to New York, over 1200 miles away, they charged five cents per bushel. That is, they charged the rural laborers and "hayseeds" thirty times as much as the merchants of New York!

My nephews, the Messrs. Watsons, were millers in Frankfort; bought a mill in two hours' drive by

rail to Chicago and were doing a good business, but the robbers charged them as much for two hours' drive as they did millers in Minneapolis, the cheap wheat region, to bring the flour and wheat to Chicago, over one thousand miles. They then sold out and went to Minneapolis. Here they entered into a good trade with the South, but the robbers once more raised the prices upon flour until they had no profit and were ruined once more. In despair, they moved to Jersey City, on the Hudson, to escape from the robbers and use only water-power.

And having monopolized all the profits of industry in the United States, we are now invited to trade on railroads to the sea, at Cape Horn, through all the continent. We are told that there is a surplus (overproduction) in the United States of both manufactures and farm products, and that we want not a tariff, but "additional markets."

These robbers have ruined the forty millions of "hayseeds" here, and the laborers in city and country, and now we are told that we must pay for the extensions of railroads to the South Seas; and then we must take to the Pacific Ocean, and explore China and the pristine nations.

No. What we want is not "additional markets," but honest distribution of the products of labor. For I defend not the "hayseeds" only, but every honest laborer in America, whether he lives in cities or country, mines in the earth, or expends the "sweat of his brow" upon the waters of the oceans.

Having touched upon these crimes, let us see about the trusts, combines, and other robberies. Passing over the beef swindle already named, let us look at Rockefeller & Co., of Cleveland, Ohio.

By the aid of the railroads they have monopolized the whole oil-trade in the Union. They receive a greater revenue than any crowned head in the world. They sell "Standard oil" at from fifteen to twenty-five cents, retail, per gallon. From my knowledge of the oil production and manufacture, it is worth only from five to eight cents per gallon. Thus by the aid of the railroads we are swindled out of four times the value of the oil we burn. This enormous monopoly levies at will tribute upon the magnate in more than royal palaces and the starving needlewomen in the cellars and garrets of the great cities. They must pay this tax, which is self-collecting, or fall into eternal darkness and death.

So all adulterations come of these criminal combinations. I pay now twenty-five cents for Rio coffee, which I bought before these combines at thirteen cents. Out of this coffee, spread out on cloth, are picked pebbles and artificial grains about equal to the half-weight. This would make coffee cost fifty cents per pound. And so adulteration spreads, like the toads of Egypt, into all medicines and foods.

This is the worst-governed nation on earth. There is more security in Turkey, for life, liberty, and property, than here.

Men who long since ought to have been hung to the first lamp-post, live in palaces which kings would envy, ride over our highways in gilded salons, and assume royal superiority over the people whom they rob! They fill high places of honor and even aspire to the Presidency.

See them now masquerading as the "American bird," with outstretched wings and golden, glinting feathers, basking in the sunshine of popular favor.

Let them look out also with the eagle's eye; the people are on the hunt. Some of the spirit and the good rifles of 1776 yet remain. They may yet send a ball of death through these posers and impostors just under both wings.

CASSIUS MARCELLUS CLAY.

FEBRUARY 26, 1891.

SINK ALL SELFISHNESS

IN OUR GREAT LOVE FOR OUR GRAND REPUBLIC.—
CASSIUS M. CLAY'S ADVICE IN HIS LAST LETTER.—
REASONS WHY THERE SHOULD BE NO NEW PARTY.—
TOUCHING THE RAILROADS.

No. 4.

HOW TO DESTROY THE RAILROAD ROBBERS.

This is a government of majorities. The landholders and operatives and doctors of medicine and divinity in the country, the blacksmiths, carpenters, etc., of the towns, all have a common interest. And to these we may add the merchants and operatives of all but the citizens of the great centres, which rival Babylon and Rome,—New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco, and a few other great cities of trade. To these great cities the present railroad system, as I said before, draws the population, not only from the country, but absorbs the smaller towns. On the other hand, we have the railroad banditti and their allies, the great manufacturers, Wall Street gamblers, capitalists, bankers, great merchants, combines of all sorts, adulterators of food, and the law-

yers and politicians and the press, who do the advertising and carry free tickets in their pockets. In such a contest, when once in earnest, we are bound to triumph.

THE PEOPLE'S PARTY.

1. Let all the Granges, Country People's Patriotic Unions, Wheels, Farmers' Alliance, and other cultivators of the soil now combined for political action, all the unions of workers, the Knights of Labor, and the hundreds of other societies unite in one national party and make war upon the common enemy. Let the old parties stand. Don't let us make a new party. The organization of the People's Party will cost nothing. Let them have a few faithful officers in a central town whose duty it will be to see that every county in the nation has a committee.

2. The committees will simply meet at the several court-houses and ask the candidates for the State government, "Will you in good faith vote that the nation shall resume her right of 'eminent domain' over the highways and run the railroads for the people?" and vote accordingly. This will soon give us rule in the Senate of the United States.

3. The committees of the counties will form a committee in each Congressional district and proceed in the same way with candidates for Congress. So we could change the Lower House in a single election.

4. And so proceed with the nominees for President and Vice-President of the United States.

5. When no candidate will pledge himself to go with us, then run a candidate for the office only in the counties, and so continue until we triumph.

6. After our success the National and State Committees will continue simply as vigilants, remembering, with Jefferson, that "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

REASONS FOR NO NEW PARTY.

1. We are not handicapped with the old party ambitions and interests which so weigh with all men.

2. We are aided by all the functions of all the societies of industry who have their individual affairs of interest in them.

3. We avoid the splits which come of personal ambition.

4. We make it impossible for traitors to sell us out, as we have but one issue, and to abandon that is to abandon all.

5. It saves time and money.

THE NEW DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.

1. Whenever we get the majority in the national legislature, we will pass an act to condemn and pay for at a fair rate the inter-state railways, and run them under a new Cabinet officer, the head of the Department of Commerce.

This department will at first be confined, perhaps, to railroads, and water-ways, and all transportation; afterwards it may include telegraphs and expresses, etc.

2. Means of purchase. Let the railroads be condemned and paid for in bonds of the United States at fifty or one hundred years, which could be sold at

par, bearing interest at two or three per cent., and the railroad stock could be paid for with them, or the cash which they would bring here or in Europe.

3. The railroads would be run by the same operatives as now, and we would have no more strikes. These now claim that they have made in a few years five billions (\$5,000,000,000) of money, including cash, bonds, and plant. The government could make as much or more money than they, because they would lose nothing by useless competition.

They could pay the interest—have a sinking fund to redeem at will the principal—and, in my judgment, have surplus enough to pay all the normal expenses of the Federal government.

ADVANTAGES OF THIS DEPARTMENT.

1. It would kill all the combines, robberies, and adulteration of seeds and food, etc.

The law would forbid the department to move any adulterated freight or any product of the combines, and that would kill them all in an hour.

Inspectors would be appointed in all the centres of commerce.

2. It would deplete the cities and fill up the country again, and restore prosperity once more, by justice and honesty in all freights—equal rights to rich and poor.

3. The wealth of the nation would follow the normal laws of distribution, and we would need no standing armies as in Europe. For the people, when a majority have an interest in the property of the nation, are its best defenders. We don't want a strong government, but a strong people.

Let us then sink all selfishness in our great love for the republic, standing near to Almighty God of the Universe, who is ever the Defender of the Right.

CASSIUS MARCELLUS CLAY.

WHITE HALL, KY., Feb., 1891.

RAILROAD NATIONALIZATION.

HON. CASSIUS M. CLAY'S REPLY TO THE COUNTRY
PEOPLE'S PATRIOTIC UNION.

No. 41.

ERIE, PA.—FAIRVIEW, October 1, 1889.

HON. CASSIUS M. CLAY, WHITE HALL, KY.:

Dear Sir,—Your recent utterances through the New York *Independent*, denunciatory of the private railroad system of the United States as the chief cause of the present miseries of the farmers and laborers of the United States, and declaratory of the opinion that the nationalization of our United States railroads is consequently an imperative necessity of the times, are at once and equally deserving of the grateful acknowledgment and serious attention of your fellow-citizens. Your fellow-farmers, whom the cruel oppressions practised upon them by our private railroad corporations are rapidly bringing to penury, and the degradation sure to follow extreme impoverishment, have especially great reason to rejoice that a man of your venerable age, exalted personal character, and high distinction in the service, as well of humanity as of your country, has spoken

out so seasonably, so fearlessly, so truthfully, and so wisely upon this vitally important subject.

We, who take the liberty of thus addressing you, are officers and members of the "Parent Societies of the Country People's Patriotic Union," operating respectively in the national Republican and Democratic parties. As the only professed object of these societies is the nationalization of our American railroads, we feel warranted in hoping that you will regard our address as both natural and appropriate. Rest assured, honored sir, that it is the spontaneous offering of our hearts, and speaks our unfeigned sentiments.

We beg your acceptance of the enclosed copy of the Declaration and Constitution of the Country People's Patriotic Union. From these documents you will learn that the Country People's Patriotic Union is an effort to organize our farmers and country towns folk in politics in such a manner as to enable them to act unitedly as it respects the object stated, and separately as it respects the parties to which they belong. The American farmer must be stone-blind to the present situation of affairs who cannot see that our national government has to a very great extent been usurped by the private railroad interest of this country, and that the whole machinery of state is now employed to further the selfish views of that particular interest and its parasites, not so much to the mere neglect, as to the positive destruction, of the much more—nay, infinitely more—important interest of agriculture.

Just now the leading representatives of the railroad interest and its parasites are engaged in the endeavor to inveigle Congress into a number of new

schemes for their advantage,—such for example, among others, as, first, an international railroad to connect the United States and South America; second, trade reciprocity with South America; third, the Nicaragua Canal project, the movers of which are putting out feelers for an endorsement of the United States Government of the bonds of the Nicaragua Canal Company; fourth, trade reciprocity with Canada, or, in lieu thereof, the annexation of Canada to the United States. What is the explanation of these phenomena? In our minds it is this: Railroad discrimination against our farmers, and railroad competition with them, has made them almost universally poor. It has consequently so curtailed the volume of our domestic business that the capital ready and anxious to invest itself among us in manufactures, trade and commerce is much in excess of present opportunities to do so with profit. This state of things has nonplussed the pseudo-statesmen at the head of our affairs—nonplussed them, that is to say, on those lines of political action heretofore pursued by them for the purpose of promoting the prosperity of the special interests of which they are the new exploits we speak of.

Instead of addressing themselves to the work of promoting the general welfare by bringing substantial and permanent relief to the suffering farmer in the only practicable way, viz., that of railroad nationalization, they are plotting to invade and devastate our neighbors, and that not for the benefit of our farmers, but for that of their oppressors. "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." But when the eagles have devoured the carcass, it is to be expected that they

will abandon the unfleshed skeleton and seek for other prey. Our railroad corporations and their parasites, having laid waste the greater portion of the United States, are now trying to incite Congress to procure them a chance to expoliate South America and Canada.

In our judgment, as in yours, the question of railroad reform immeasurably transcends in importance all other questions of political economy now before the American public. It is our desire to enlist the whole mass of our country people in favor of railroad nationalization as the only thing that can bring back to our farmers their lost prosperity, lost independence, and lost political consequence. If the laborers in our cities, and other people favoring national railroads, could be induced to seize upon our idea and organize themselves in the same way, and for the same object, under the style of the City People's Patriotic Union, or some other, it would seem that the two organizations might easily soon accomplish their common purpose.

With a hearty prayer to God for His blessing upon you, and another for His blessing upon the righteous cause of national railroads, we subscribe ourselves, very respectfully, your obliged fellow-citizens and friends,

EPHRAIM BOWER,
JOHN O. PERKINS,
GEO. McCRAY,
O. LOHRER,
F. LANDER,
C. B. WILLIS,
J. J. PLATZ,
MICHAEL WEIGEL,
WM. KERNICK,

CHARLES WEAVER,
JOHN F. GIMBER,
GEO. A. McCRAY,
F. KUHLE,
G. B. MYER,
FRANKLIN WILLIS,
SAM. S. WEILDER,
E. A. FERREY,
WM. RUSSELL,

J. A. KLINE,
C. RUSTERHOLTZ,
WM. MILLER,
WM. DUNCAN,
JOHN KUHL,
JOHN SHEMELTER,
N. WAIDLEY,
R. B. KELSO,
SAMUEL PLATZ,
C. K. SWAN,
P. J. RUHL,
E. PLATZ, SR.,

O. H. P. FERGUSON,
JAS. A. WEBSTER,
WM. P. PERRY,
ISAAC MYERS,
MILLARD F. LUTHER,
R. KREIDER,
DAN. LOECHNER,
JACOB ZAHN,
A. FUESSLER,
CHAS. KATZEMAN,
G. W. MOSHER,
WM. F. OLBERG,

LEVI HELDLER.

[The foregoing letter reached its address some weeks subsequent to its date, at a time when Mr. Clay was ill. On the 11th inst. Mr. Clay answered the letter, submitting the following views upon the subject of American railroad nationalization, which he permits his correspondents to publish in aid of that cause.]

THE RAILROAD ROBBERS MUST GO.

1. No new party is needed. Let us have no others to handicap the one great issue.

2. Let all the farmers, the Alliance, Grangers, Wheels, etc., unite in a national effort simply to create an anti-robber committee in each county in the Union. Let these committees ask each candidate for Congress—Republican and Democrat—"will you vote in good faith that the government shall own the inter-state railroads?" and vote according to the answer.

3. Thus, in the next election even, we may carry our cause.

4. When neither of the leading parties consent, then only run a people's candidate, and only in such districts.

5. It is a mistake to suppose that the late extraordinary Congressional elections had much to do with Republicanism or Democracy. It was but an uprising of the people against our oppressors of both parties.

6. Well, "the hayseeds" of Kentucky have killed the railroad robbers in the constitutional convention! And the tobacco-growers have killed the warehouse robber-combine in Louisville and Cincinnati!

7. The "hayseeds" of England (the greatest power among the nations) and the workers rule. Here, also, will the same classes rule, as they are the most just—and a majority.

RAILROADS OWNED BY THE NATION.

The right of eminent domain over the lands and highways is an inalienable right of sovereignty; here the people are sovereign. As the railroad robbers had the lands condemned and alienated for their use under pretence of the public good, so the people, through Congress, can condemn and pay for the inter-state railways, or so many of them as they deem necessary, and run them as the post-office is run, for the people. When the inter-state railways belong to the government, they can regulate and reduce to justice all the State railways by refusing to carry for the robbers any freight or passengers, and thus have control of the whole railroad system.

The right of the nation to run roads through States is given by the United States Constitution, and was settled by precedent when Henry Clay ran the National highway from the Atlantic to the

Mississippi River, when it was superseded by the railroad.

* * *

Since this writing (Justice John M. Harlan, of the Supreme Court of the United States of America, delivering the opinions of the Court), all these principles claimed by me have been sustained. Supreme Court of the United States. No. 664—October Term, 1889, *The Cherokee Nation, Appellant, vs. The Southern Kansas Railway Company*, May 19, 1890. No. 1154—October Term, 1890, *John A. Brimmer—Sergeant of the city of Norfolk, Appellant, vs. William Rebman*, January 19, 1891.

KILL ALL TRUSTS.

Thus the secretary of the new Department of Commerce can kill all the trusts, combines, and other robbers, by refusing to transport any produce belonging to these banditti.

EXPENSE OF PURCHASE.

When the robbers are driven from all defence they cry out, "The people cannot pay for our \$10,000,000,000 of capital." After throwing out watered stock and unproductive roads, the government could make more out of the roads than the robbers, because justice would revive trade and production.

A GREAT INVESTMENT.

I say without hesitation that the best investment ever made by a government would be the ownership

of the railroads. Issue bonds for fifty years, and they would sell at par, no doubt bearing $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 per cent. interest. But the nation could make 10 per cent. or 20 per cent. at will, and the principal and interest could be paid off without the expenditure of a dollar, and enough could be made, perhaps, to pay the normal expenses of the national government.

STRIKES.

The employes of the railroads would continue their work under just management, and strikes would cease forever; and the interruption of trade and the suffering from the want of coal, etc., would cease.

Without this ownership the people would be reduced to poverty and slavery, or there would be one of the bloodiest revolutions the world ever saw.

And the robbers must go!

CASSIUS M. CLAY.

WHITE HALL, KY., January, 1891.

NOTES.

[From the *Lexington Leader*, Rep.]

The series of articles now running in *The Leader* from the pen of Hon. Cassius M. Clay, Sr., is attracting much attention; and while many persons do not agree with the veteran Kentuckian in his radical views, all agree that in the existing condition of things there is room for reform.

[From the *Courier-Journal* and *Jessamine (Ky.) Journal*.]

Hon. Cassius M. Clay, Sr., is writing a series of letters to the *Lexington Leader* directed against what he denominates "the railroad robbers." He writes with all his old vigor, and is sweeping in his denunciations.

[At the Mexican War Veterans' Sixteenth Annual Reunion, eighty-eight Veterans were present—Republicans and Democrats—at Mt. Vernon, O., May 8-9, 1890. Hon. Cassius Marcellus Clay delivered the address.]

Reporter: The gallant general concluded his speech by referring in eloquent terms to the dangers threatening the republic in consequence of the tendency to the aggregation of wealth in the hands of the few, and the further danger arising from the growing power of corporations, more particularly the railroad companies.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME BY DR. J. C. GORDON, AT THE
WOODARD OPERA HOUSE.

Cassius Marcellus Clay, a descendant of that famous name that has been honorably and intimately connected with the history of our country from its earliest infancy to the present time. An American citizen who has distinguished himself as a diplomatist, soldier, patriot, and philanthropist. One who has ever dared to do, and had the moral courage to stand by his convictions, and from his stand-point of right present his views, even at the risk of life; for with the integrity of a Clay and the undaunted moral courage of his ancestors, he feared no danger, for life is of small account when the almighty power of force and truth, with our liberties, are crushed to earth.

AT THE BANQUET.

Hon. H. H. Greer presided: "The grand old Commonwealth of Kentucky, with all her richness and grandeur, with all her power and glory, possessing all that makes her powerful and great, prosperous and elegant in all that constitutes true eminence, sends to us one of her foremost citizens, one of her most distinguished sons—a most finished orator, bearing a family name world-wide—a man that has made that State illustrious and renowned throughout the civilized world—in all countries and in all nations wherever the English language is spoken, that great name inspires freedom of thought, freedom of action, and freedom of purpose—the great name of Clay." (Cheers.)

[From *Harper's Weekly*, G. W. Curtis, Ed., Jan. 21,
1891.]

A SIGN OF THE TIMES.

The associations which, under the general name of Farmers' Alliance, as organized throughout the country, are a sign of the times not to be overlooked. They are the political form which is given to a feeling which is observable on all sides, extending quite beyond the circle of those who actually take part in such associations. In New York its latest manifestation is the State Farmers' League, which recently issued at Utica a declaration of principles. The mainspring of the movement is what is called the aristocracy of wealth. This hostility is due to the conviction that consolidated capital commands special privileges which are denied to the greatest industrial class in the country, that of agriculture.

The paramount question and peril of the country, says a large western landholder, is monopoly and public robbery. He finds an illustration in the railways. "Armour sends his beef to New York for forty dollars the car-load and shares the profit with them. An honest man has to pay one hundred dollars for the same service." His remedy is government control of the railroads. His argument is that the government will run them efficiently and honestly, as it does the post-office. It can carry passengers and heavy freight as easily and as well as it carries letters and light freight.

This feeling that unfairly-favored classes exist, and that they are constantly becoming more powerful, that they tend to increase and extend individual poverty, and that personal subjugation is historically the consequence of wide-spread poverty, is undoubtedly spreading. It is a discontent which, in the American way, organizes itself for relief by political means, and there are those who interpret the result of the late election not so much as a rebuke of the class-favorite sin of the McKinley bill, as an expression of general and profound dissatisfaction with the political situation, etc. . . . See page 82 of that old, able and conservative journal—always on the side of liberty.

C. M. C.

[From the *Century*, New York.]

"DANGER AHEAD."

Some passages in an article in the *Century* for November last, written by Dr. Lyman Abbott, under the title of "Danger Ahead," are adversely criticised by H. C. Fulton in an open letter in the February number.

The government is the political person of the people. It is animated by the spirit or genius of the people, and in all operations will display that spirit or genius with a freedom and naturalness corresponding to the freedom and naturalness with which a man displays his own career.

Dr. Abbott has not misconceived the province of government in the instance before us.

The public railroads and the telegraph of this country were built and are operated by corporations created by government especially for that purpose. Those corporations are public persons, and not private persons; they are artificial persons and not natural persons; artificial or conventional subjects, and not natural subjects of the State. Public railroads and telegraphs are therefore public and not private institutions, their business is public and not private business, and they and their business are therefore properly subject to government regulation.

Government, being competent to create a subject for the especial purpose of enabling it to render a necessarily public service, is, and must be, competent to compel that subject to conform to the law of its creation and execute the design of its being.

Failing that, there is no sort of reasonable question that the government is competent to dispense with all other agents, and render the required service itself. Nor is there the least room for doubt that our government is entirely competent to undertake the general railroad and telegraph service of this country at any time and under any circumstances, upon the sole pretence of promoting the general welfare.

Our government has always been considered competent to render us the postal service,—i. e., to carry our letters for us. To say that our government is not also competent to render

us railroad service,—i. e., to carry ourselves and other baggage, and other *bona mobilia* for us,—is mere cant and nonsense.

JOHN C. PERKINS.

And The Railroad-Robbers Must Go.

CASSIUS MARCELLUS CLAY.

WHITE HALL, MADISON COUNTY, KY., March, 1891.

GOLD AND SILVER.

THE SUBJECT OF ONE OF HON. C. M. CLAY'S LETTERS.

HE THINKS THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AND GROVER CLEVELAND ARE RIGHT IN OPPOSING FREE COINAGE OF SILVER.

No. 5.

GOLD AND SILVER MONEY.

Editor of *The Leader*:

It was my purpose to discuss the subject of railways in this series of papers, but the extraordinary act of the Kansas Legislature calls for an episode in regard to money, which is of next importance to railways. My paper upon money, read before the Filson Club of Louisville last year, and copied into the *Louisville Journal* and most of the leading political papers of the Union, was exhaustive, and was never controverted by any one. Treasury-Secretary Windom, breaking from the precedents of his predecessors, though following in the path of my argument, just stopped short of a final solution of this vexed question.

MY ARGUMENT

Is summed up in a nutshell—equality of gold and silver dollars, and of paper money in value, and the paper money representing coin convertible at will of the holder. The trouble in Congress is not want of knowledge, but the perversion of power to the criminal favoritism of classes at the expense of the people. Many persons believe that the unlimited coinage of silver, inferior in value to gold, would relieve the debtor and the laborer! Let us see. The late report of the Treasurer showed that the standard gold dollar was worth, say 100 cents, whilst the standard silver dollar was worth only seventy-two cents.

In other words, the debtor, paying 72 cents, might be advantaged to the extent of 28 cents on every dollar of his bonded debt. But, on the other hand, every laborer and seller in the nation would lose 28 cents on every dollar. Here somebody is cheated! So it is the interest of the great majority of the people to have an equally valuable dollar, gold, silver, and paper.

The Republican party and Cleveland were right in going against unlimited coinage or "free coinage" of silver, if the terms have different meanings. But the Republicans were wrong in not making the coins of gold and silver equal; or in not readjusting the standard basis of gold and silver, which is now sixteen grains of pure silver to one of gold in the dollar, and then making them equal legal tenders, and coining them with or without seigniorage (charge) upon terms of equality. Wall Street gamblers, the "gold-bugs," and silver miners were all interested in "the way not to do it."

THE SUNRISE IN KANSAS.

But the "hayseeds" in Kansas have solved the question. Rumor comes that they have passed a law making gold and silver standard dollars equally receivable in payment of taxes and debts, and that no bond to pay gold only shall be valid in law.

Let every State pass similar laws and let Congress repeal the silver purchase bill, by which silver miners are getting a premium on silver, by excluding foreign silver, and the Wall Street gamblers and the gold-bugs are beaten. The probability is that gold and silver would, without any readjustment, return to their ancient equality.

But if, after full experiment, they do not, it will be time enough to increase the silver in the standard dollar, or, what is better, reduce the quantity of gold.

By the Constitution of the United States, sec. 8, c. 5, Congress has power "to coin money and regulate the value thereof." But they have no power to say what dollar shall pass in the States. The repeal law, or demonetizing of silver in 1873, was a bold and shameless robbery by the confederated capitalists of the Union. The States, being near the people, can force the conspirators to terms, and the railway robbers must go.

CASSIUS M. CLAY.

WHITE HALL, 1891.

GEN. CASSIUS M. CLAY

CONTINUES HIS ARTICLES ON ABUSES OF RAILROAD POWER.—HE APPLAUDS THE WORK OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION AND WELCOMES THE ON-SLAUGHT OF THOSE WHO WOULD CRY DOWN THE NEW INSTRUMENT.

No. 6.

DEATH OF THE RAILWAY ROBBERY.

The United States Supreme Court, with that ability and patriotism which has made it the impregnable castle of American liberty, is fast establishing on the eternal basis of law those inalienable rights which I have claimed in these papers.

1. The right of "eminent domain" over the highways rests forever in the sovereign power—the people.

THE CHEROKEE NATION, Appellant,

vs.

THE KANSAS RAILWAY COMPANY.

No. 664.—May 13, 1890.

2. The claim made by me that the national railway management could "reduce to justice" the State railways.

JOHN A. BRIMMER

vs.

WILLIAM REBMAN.

No. 1154.—January 19, 1891.

In this case it was decided that the State of Virginia could not discriminate, under pretence of inspection laws, against inter-state railway management by her agents, the State railways.

3. And now we have the decision of the Supreme Court that State railways cannot discriminate against shippers in the States, or to outside points as far as the road goes.

No. 33.—October Term, 1890.

THE COVINGTON STOCK-YARD COMPANY

vs.

CHAS. W. KEITH AND EDWARD W. WILSON.

Appeal from the U.S.C. of the District of Kentucky.
(March 2, 1891.)

Mr. Justice Harlan (again) delivered the opinion of the Court.

Here the Kentucky Central Railway ("wreckers") made a contract with the Covington Stock-Yard Live Stock Company ("combine") to furnish at their

own expense the usual yards, etc., for the reception and forwarding of live stock, and to pay further sixty cents (.60) to the railway for each car-load of stock delivered or forwarded. In consideration of which service the railway robbers agreed to give said (combine) Covington Stock-Yard Company the monopoly of the trade in that city, and to charge all other shippers not less than five dollars (\$5) per car-load of live stock more than they charged said ("trust") company.

In the mean time, this company—which I had denounced on the stump in Madison County as "wreckers" and "robbers," and who in the name of "progress and civilization, and development of Kentucky resources"—the robber cry, by which the parasite lawyers of Madison County took \$500,000 from this county, being one dollar of every fourteen of the whole property of Madison County,—being ripe for the "wreck,"—went into the hands of the usual receiver. Hence, this suit and official expose of these criminal conspirators against the property and liberty of the people.

4. The court decided that this contract was unconstitutional, illegal, and void. That no such discrimination of freight charges could be made to the prejudice of other shippers, and that the railway receiver was, as the temporary representative of that company, bound to place facilities of entrance and exit at reasonable distances in every city, free alike to all shippers, and without charges for yards and other needed conveniences for reception and reshipment. 'Rah!

5. Now, there may perhaps be brains enough in the "Development and Progress and English Capi-

tal" party to see that these principles are based upon reason and constitutional law, and will, as soon as the people can get the case of the long and short haul before the United States Supreme Court, they are bound to decide that Congress has no power themselves, or by their agent, the catspaw,—Inter-State Commerce Commission,—to discriminate between American shippers by land or sea in favor of the robbers and their parasites. But as the foundation of this whole power to build or run roads rests upon "the general welfare," every shipper must have equal rights. And further, that if any discrimination between the long and short hauls should be necessary to transportation, it should be on the side of the short haul, for the poor mostly use this haul, and the corporations, speculators, capitalists, and combines use the long haul. For no principle of political and judicial justice is better settled in this republic, than that government rests upon the needed protection of the weak, for in a state of nature and advanced civilization the strong can take care of themselves.*

6. Let the national government then resume her eminent domain over all the ways of commerce, including telegraphs, expresses, etc., and run them for the benefit of the people.

7. This can be best done by the new Department of Commerce.

* The United States Supreme Court, *McCullough vs. The State of Maryland*. The great lawyer Pinkney, for the appellant, said: "An act of incorporation is but a law, and all laws are but means to promote the legitimate end of all government, the felicity of the people."

The celebrated case of *Dartmouth College* will be reviewed hereafter. It maintains the same doctrine. C. M. C.

By this department we could kill in an hour all the trusts, combines, and swindles and robberies which constitute the parasites of these robbers, under several names engaged in transportation.

We could thus settle all the great issues which now disturb the country.

It would solve the question of tariff and free trade—of subsidies to transporters by sea and land.

It would break down the sectional divisions of North and South, East and West, and consolidate our Union by a common interest stronger than iron-clad ships or standing armies, and make civil war hereafter impossible.

It would prevent strikes of the employés of the transportation companies, which only are dangerous to the public peace.

It would replace the necessity of taxes upon foreign imports and on the debasing internal revenue system. For the charges upon freight, passengers, and all that would be the grandest, cheapest, and most sufferable system of taxation ever invented in the history of nations, and solve the great question of tax upon incomes and grade of rates upon excessive accumulation of land and money in the hands of the few against the many, which now is bound to be the greatest injury of our times.

8. The Constitutional Convention of Kentucky has done a grand work—they have stood with heroic courage in defence of the liberties of mankind. Their names will stand forever—immortal in the history of the human race. Their "radicalism" is the inspiration of the evolution of our times, when the highest intellects and the truest, noblest sentiments mark them the children of God.

9. The tyrants who have stolen into the places of power, the traitors who have sold our liberties, have in hot haste declared war upon the new Constitution and the principles of self-government and the people's rule! We accept with all our hearts the challenge.

CASSIUS MARCELLUS CLAY.

WHITE HALL, KY., March, 1891.

[*Kentucky Register.*]

RAILROAD NATIONALIZATION.

LETTER TO HON. CASSIUS M. CLAY.

Like a clap of thunder in a clear sky fell on our ears the words of that Nestor of Reform on the above-named subject, published not long since in the columns of the *Register*. Having been observant, through a long life, of the incipency of so many railroad enterprises, and especially those aided by the government; having seen the power which these threw into the hands of a few to drain the government, on the one hand, and oppress the people on the other; and having seen their huge influence on the legislation of the land, which they exert, we have often wondered that words like those of Mr. Clay have not long since been spoken.

It may be supposed that a large number of our people are not aware of the fact that many of our great lines of travel, and especially those named trans-continental, have actually been built, though indirectly, by the funds never in the pockets of the corporations that now control them; in other words, the United States Government has furnished the construction; and should the question be asked of some of the railroad magnates of this land of ours, how much all this magnificence of possession and splendor cost them, how much they actually paid out for the position they occupy, and the uncounted millions they are reputed worth, and they would refer onward the answer to the day of judgment!

That the readers of the *Register* may not count these suggestions extravagant, I would call attention to an article in

a Western paper, not many years ago, in which the writer, discussing the probabilities of a certain company building a certain road, came to the conclusion that its construction would cost them nothing, as the land offered by the government would be sufficient to defray all the expenses. Two reflections here very naturally arise: one is, if the government has been so far a contributor as to actually pay the cost of constructing a road, why should it not own and control the property when finished, as it owns and controls the postal service of the nation, and as it should own and control our telegraphic interest? But a more humiliating reflection is the fact that here we have a solution of the question relating to the rapid disappearance of our public domain. The man who reached his majority anywhere between 1840 and 1850 had seen pass into the hands of corporations and private individuals nearly all the land west and north of Lake Michigan, lying between the two great rivers, nearly all of Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas; and our trans-continental path lies through regions of mineral and agricultural wealth, which millions upon millions fail to count, vast portions of which are in the hands of corporations and individuals, who are often the satellites of corporations, and for which no equivalent has been paid. Think of seven trains daily of coal going out of one bank alone, for which the roads have paid not one cent. Of these vast possessions, which should have been held in sacred trust for our children, much have been squandered in the interests of individuals and companies, who have laid the foundations of fortunes, which grow to the ruin of the masses, to the corruption of our government, and to bring about that very "European pauperage" which all writers on "protection" so sadly deprecate.

This is a broad and deep subject, and all a newspaper article can do is simply to call attention to it; which we now do, hoping that Mr. Clay may crown the last years of his life with such work and success in this matter as will entitle him to be called the "American Gladstone." And if any rising politician desires to become anything more than a jolly stump speaker, we would commend this subject as one worthy of his most careful study.

A READER OF THE "REGISTER."